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775 825 engaged in pitched battle with a large number of *sovai*; but whenever they brought down one of their opponents it would turn into a wallaby or a bird and make off.

One may mention at this point several variant forms of the *sovai*. The fire-fly (*sui*) is very commonly regarded as a *sovai* form; sometimes more fancifully it is said that the fire-flies are the eyeballs of the dead. Again, the phos- [824] phorescent fungi *himbaja* may be *sovai*, though, of course, they are not always so, and little boys will play with them quite fearlessly, fixing them as luminous disks to their foreheads at night time. Again, the *sovai* may take the form of the *siriho*, i.e. the nest of the termite in a tree, which for some reason always has an uncanny suggestion to an Orokaiva. Again the meteor *hara* has been referred to in my hearing [821] as a *sovai*, though I do not believe this to be an important or a general belief.

775 One variant, or rather specific, form of the *sovai* is, however, of great interest. When a man has been slain in fight he becomes a *diroga*, and although the actual form or forms of the *diroga* have never been accurately defined in my hearing, they all have this much in common that they are *i-sovai* —'upper' or 'on top' *sovai*—i.e. they do not belong to the earth or the stream, but flit about in the upper air, where they are sometimes heard to whistle as they pass. This singular, but apparently very general, belief has formed the groundwork of one of the variants of the Taro Cult, and a fuller description of the subject may be seen in the report on that movement.[1]

We may now pass to the third general form in which the *sovai* may appear, viz. that of a fiend or hobgoblin, or of any monstrous creature that inhabits the bush and is liable to attack the lonely wanderer. Various imaginative descriptions are given of the *sovai* in this character. They may have hairy bodies and long fangs; several have pictured them with eyes in the back of their heads; one informant who saw a *sovai* in his boyhood recalled with horror the unnatural skinniness of its arms and legs. It is in this form that the spirits of the dead are represented to the initiates among the

[1] 'The Taro Cult' in *Orokaiva Magic*, pp. 68–72.

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the patient make him a present, which he accepts, probably with no attempt to conceal his disgust if it be too small. A number of informants being told that the European doctor had a habit of rendering his account, replied that it was not so with the New Guinea doctor: sometimes his patients paid; sometimes they did not; but, unlike the white man, he was not wild with those who did not choose to pay. One old man, ex-corporal of police, said he was well enough aware of the white man's custom in this matter and intended to act up to it himself. Whereas formerly he had been over-generous with his skill, he now meant to insist on payment or would stand by and see the patient die. These protestations notwithstanding, it is customary to pay or reward the doctor. have no definite instance of out-and-out extortion, though I should be very reluctant to assert that extortion is never practised by the Taro man. As was pointed out, the native is shrewd enough to conceal what he knows to be unlawful, so that we cannot look for candid confession.

It is natural enough that the Taro specialist should claim some authority over the weather. Although this weather-control is of small importance among his other activities, it deserves a brief mention. When, as so often, the afternoon sky is darkened by approaching rain, and the success of the feast is threatened, the Taro man will utter a loud inarticulate cry, a true note without rise or fall, and prolonged to the limit of his lungs' endurance. He may sweep the clouds back with angry gestures and cry *Wa doio*, 'Cease rain!' or *Hambujo, hambujo*, 'Rain, rain go away!' He may have medicines such as the branches of *Isuga* or *Esege*, which are scorched in the fire and flourished against the oncoming storm; indeed, it was maintained by some that without the medicine (which is likely to be a close secret) a man would yell and wave his arms entirely in vain.

Sometimes the rain is averted, sometimes it disregards the Taro man and gives him a wetting. A number of young men sitting in the *ba oro* were watching with

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apprehension the increasing blackness of the sky. There was a great accumulation of food in the village and the guests were expected in the afternoon. The singing and drum-beating of Taro men is itself efficacious against the rain. They sang and beat their drums with all the vigour of anxiety, and while they did so the mounting clouds broke over the village in a deluge of rain. This, therefore, was no ordinary rain, or it would have held off; it was the work of a sorcerer, perhaps it was said that of old Mendeambo of Bolagasusu.

As the Taro man is powerless to cure the diseases which have been caused by sorcery so is he powerless against the sorcerer's rain. His province is to deal with the rain which had been brought on by spirits, by the 'dead men'. I was told that to quarrel with a Taro man would be sufficient to bring about an untimely downpour, because the spirit immanent in him would be offended.

While the Taro man claims to avert the rain, I have, oddly enough, little evidence of his claims to make the rain. The drought has more terrors for the Orokaiva than the flood, and a long dry spell, with its attendant scarcity, is commonly ascribed to the malice of a sorcerer. Whatever the cause, it puts a check upon Taro activities. Despite its claim to succour and support the vegetable crop the cult seems unable to cope with the sun, its worst enemy as well as its best friend. One Taro man of importance made a naïve pronouncement on the case. When the sunshine and the rain both came in reasonable quantity the performance of Taro ceremonies was worth while. But when there was a 'big sun' for three months on end, what was to be done? How should they contend against the drought which ruined all their efforts? The ground was hard and hot; the young taro shoots withered and died. At such a season the Taro men might go into recess and wait for better times.

We may briefly discuss the charge of sorcery, which is cognate to doctoring and weather-magic. While the Taro man seems unable to disperse the drought, he is no

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doubt often accused of bringing it on. It is not to be supposed that weather-control belongs exclusively to the exponents of the new cult. It is merely an old-time institution which they have adapted to their own purpose; but this purpose is not always wholly in the public interest. It might probably be said that to the benevolence of magic there is always a reverse or malevolent side—sorcery. The native doctor is believed in because of some secret powers, or some secret methods: directly he uses these for an anti-social end he becomes a sorcerer. It is unnecessary to say that the sorcerer is believed to use his evil powers far more often than he actually attempts to use them: he is a sorcerer more by public opinion than by his own intent. But in this credulity he has the weapon for terrorism and extortion if he care to make use of it. A native doctor is a potential sorcerer: he can strike as well as cure.

Even when he merely refuses to cure he falls under suspicion among his neighbours. It was reported to me that a certain *Baigona* man was refusing to treat a patient. The informant—first brother to the patient—asked that the doctor might be haled before the magistrate and sent to jail. He had every confidence in the skill of the *Baigona* man, and considered it a dastardly thing that he should refuse to treat the dying man. Nowadays it is admitted that *Baigona* was full of sorcery. But the *Baigona* cult is virtually a thing of the past and witnesses will discourse of it with freedom. With regard to the Taro cult they hold their tongues, or guard them. *A priori*, however, there is good reason to suppose that the Taro men do practise a certain amount of sorcery.

One or two positive instances may be given in which the Taro men were apparently guilty of the offence. Quite recently the *Diroga* was brought to the village of Aruruta, where it flourished with true evangelistic vigour. Soon after the magistrate at Ioma was astonished to be confronted by a whole round-up of prisoners from the newly converted Aruruta, brought in by several con-

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edible leaves, and roots gathered in the bush, and will fall back on sago, which is plentiful by the coast but rare in the interior. Though there is sometimes scarcity and a certain amount of hardship, these are never, I believe, very prolonged; and they never approach to genuine famine.

Dry weather, like wet weather, may, when it is inconvenient, be ascribed to the machinations of a sorcerer. If a man go a journey and be overtaken by torrents of rain which compel him to build a bush shelter and wait, he is likely to say, 'My enemy so-and-so must have done this; he knew I wished to travel.' So when the fine weather lasts so long as to become a plague, people will bethink themselves of some sinister old man and say, 'he has made sun medicine and is keeping the bamboo "bottle" in the heat over his fire.' The people of 'Wire Rope' on the river Kumusi had a singular reputation (which they were perhaps careful to maintain) for sun-magic. There are many rain-makers and many methods of rain-making. Where the dry weather is a mere whim of Nature's, they will avail; where it is the result of sorcery, they can do nothing. At any rate the long dry spell is unwelcome weather to the Orokaiva.

Before proceeding to the principal occupation and support of the people, viz. gardening, one may dismiss with a brief mention the other phases of the food quest.

As hunters the Orokaiva are always opportunists. No man travels through the real bush without his spears and his dog, if he possess one. He is extraordinarily alert to detect his game, be it bush-pig, rat, or lizard, and will spare himself no trouble to capture the most insignificant quarry. Communally he hunts with the long net, into which the pig or wallaby is driven through the bush by a semicircle of beaters, while some stand ready behind the net with their spears. The grass plains are burnt off yearly, and yield a variety of game, from pigs and pythons to ground-rats.

The common hunting-traps are (1) *Bagi*, in which the unsuspicious pig, nosing at his bait of sago pith, releases